



February 6, 2023

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson and Committee Members:

I am representing the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide, a statewide advisory that is linked to Oregon's Suicide Prevention coalitions, includes subject matter experts, state leaders and people with lived experience from around the state. Our role is to advise the Oregon Health Authority on all matters related to youth and young adult suicide.

We have a sense of urgency about passage of HB2757 because it is an essential element of our work to save lives and reduce Oregon's high suicide rate. The national 988 line emerged out of the suicide prevention movement, and has appropriately grown to provide support and stabilization for people in a behavioral health crisis.

For context, Oregon's suicide rate is 30% higher than the national average. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Oregonians ages 10 through 44 and across the lifespan we lost 833 people to suicide in 2020 alone. 988 and mobile response hold great promise for providing "the right help at the right time" to people in crisis.

As 988 continues to become more well known, we anticipate that increased calls to 988 will result in the need for more mobile crisis response. If we don't adequately support these systems, we run the risk of having a person call 988, being appropriately assessed as being in a suicidal crisis, but not having the local capacity to send a trained behavioral health team to respond. Oregon's mobile crisis response services are currently underfunded. This bill provides an avenue for sustained funding to support 988 and this essential service.

HB2757 will support the continued implementation of crisis call centers, text line, and support mobile crisis response expansion by establishing a 988 Trust Fund to pool and integrate various sources of federal and state resources designed to fund 988 services. Legislation is necessary to establish a telecom fee as an ongoing funding source. It also creates a multi-stakeholder advisory group to advise on implementation for this new statewide system.

We urge legislators to continue to demonstrate their commitment to saving lives and addressing the needs of Oregonians in a behavioral health crisis by supporting HB2757.

On behalf of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annette A. Marcus".

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